

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

HOUSE BILL NO. 79, As Amended in the Senate

BY EDUCATION COMMITTEE

AN ACT

RELATING TO CHARTER SCHOOL ADMISSIONS; AMENDING SECTION 33-5205, IDAHO CODE, TO PROVIDE CHARTER SCHOOLS WITH THE OPTION OF AWARDING AN ENHANCED ENROLLMENT OPPORTUNITY TO THE CHILDREN OF CERTAIN EMPLOYEES AND CERTAIN RETURNING STUDENTS AND TO MAKE A TECHNICAL CORRECTION.

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Idaho:

SECTION 1. That Section 33-5205, Idaho Code, be, and the same is hereby amended to read as follows:

33-5205. PETITION TO ESTABLISH PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL. (1) Any group of persons may petition to establish a new public charter school, or to convert an existing traditional public school to a public charter school.

(a) A petition to establish a new public charter school, including a public virtual charter school, shall be signed by not fewer than thirty (30) qualified electors of the attendance area designated in the petition. Proof of elector qualifications shall be provided with the petition.

(b) A petition to establish a new public virtual school must be submitted directly to the public charter school commission. A petition to establish a new public charter school, other than a new public virtual school, shall first be submitted to the local board of trustees in which the public charter school will be located. A petition shall be considered to be received by an authorized chartering entity as of the next scheduled meeting of the authorized chartering entity after submission of the petition.

(c) The board of trustees may either: (i) consider the petition and approve the charter; or (ii) consider the petition and deny the charter; or (iii) refer the petition to the public charter school commission, but such referral shall not be made until the local board has documented its due diligence in considering the petition. Such documentation shall be submitted with the petition to the public charter school commission. If the petitioners and the local board of trustees have not reached mutual agreement on the provisions of the charter, after a reasonable and good faith effort, within sixty (60) days from the date the charter petition is received, the petitioners may withdraw their petition from the local board of trustees and may submit their charter petition to the public charter school commission, provided it is signed by thirty (30) qualified electors as required by subsection (1)(a) of this section. Documentation of the reasonable and good faith effort between the petitioners and the local board of trustees must be submitted with the petition to the public charter school commission.

(d) The public charter school commission may either: (i) consider the petition and approve the charter; or (ii) consider the petition and deny the charter.

(e) A petition to convert an existing traditional public school shall be submitted to the board of trustees of the district in which the school is located for review and approval. The petition shall be signed by not fewer than sixty percent (60%) of the teachers currently employed by the school district at the school to be converted, and by one (1) or more parents or guardians of not fewer than sixty percent (60%) of the students currently attending the school to be converted. Each petition submitted to convert an existing school or to establish a new charter school shall contain a copy of the articles of incorporation and the bylaws of the nonprofit corporation, which shall be deemed incorporated into the petition.

(2) Not later than sixty (60) days after receiving a petition signed by thirty (30) qualified electors as required by subsection (1)(a) of this section, the authorized chartering entity shall hold a public hearing for the purpose of discussing the provisions of the charter, at which time the authorized chartering entity shall consider the merits of the petition and the level of employee and parental support for the petition. In the case of a petition submitted to the public charter school commission, such public hearing must be not later than sixty (60) days after receipt of the petition, which may be extended to ninety (90) days if both parties agree to an extension, and the public hearing shall also include any oral or written comments that an authorized representative of the school district in which the proposed public charter school would be physically located may provide regarding the merits of the petition and any potential impacts on the school district. Following review of the petition and the public hearing, the authorized chartering entity shall either approve or deny the charter within sixty (60) days after the date of the public hearing, provided however, that the date may be extended by an additional sixty (60) days if the petition fails to contain all of the information required in this section, or if both parties agree to the extension. This public hearing shall be an opportunity for public participation and oral presentation by the public. This hearing is not a contested case hearing as described in chapter 52, title 67, Idaho Code.

(3) An authorized chartering entity may approve a charter under the provisions of this chapter only if it determines that the petition contains the requisite signatures, the information required by subsections (4) and (5) of this section, and additional statements describing all of the following:

(a) The proposed educational program of the public charter school, designed among other things, to identify what it means to be an "educated person" in the twenty-first century, and how learning best occurs. The goals identified in the program shall include how all educational thoroughness standards as defined in section 33-1612, Idaho Code, shall be fulfilled.

(b) The measurable student educational standards identified for use by the public charter school. "Student educational standards" for the purpose of this chapter means the extent to which all students of the public charter school demonstrate they have attained the skills and knowledge specified as goals in the school's educational program.

(c) The method by which student progress in meeting those student educational standards is to be measured.

(d) A provision by which students of the public charter school will be tested with the same standardized tests as other Idaho public school students.

(e) A provision which ensures that the public charter school shall be state accredited as provided by rule of the state board of education.

(f) The governance structure of the public charter school including, but not limited to, the person or entity who shall be legally accountable for the operation of the public charter school, and the process to be followed by the public charter school to ensure parental involvement.

(g) The qualifications to be met by individuals employed by the public charter school. Instructional staff shall be certified teachers as provided by rule of the state board of education.

(h) The procedures that the public charter school will follow to ensure the health and safety of students and staff.

(i) A plan for the requirements of section 33-205, Idaho Code, for the denial of school attendance to any student who is an habitual truant, as defined in section 33-206, Idaho Code, or who is incorrigible, or whose conduct, in the judgment of the board of directors of the public charter school, is such as to be continuously disruptive of school discipline, or of the instructional effectiveness of the school, or whose presence in a public charter school is detrimental to the health and safety of other pupils, or who has been expelled from another school district in this state or any other state.

(j) Admission procedures, including provision for overenrollment. Such admission procedures shall provide that the initial admission procedures for a new public charter school, including provision for overenrollment, will be determined by lottery or other random method, except as otherwise provided herein. If initial capacity is insufficient to enroll all pupils who submit a timely application, then the admission procedures may provide that preference shall be given in the following order: first, to children of founders, provided that this admission preference shall be limited to not more than ten percent (10%) of the capacity of the public charter school; second, to siblings of pupils already selected by the lottery or other random method; and third, an equitable selection process such as by lottery or other random method. If so stated in its petition, a new public charter school may include the children of full-time employees of the public charter school within the first priority group subject to the limitations therein. Otherwise, such children shall be included in the third priority group. If capacity is insufficient to enroll all pupils for subsequent school terms, who submit a timely application, then the admission procedures may provide that preference shall be given in the following order: first, to pupils returning to the public charter school in the second or any subsequent year of its operation; second, to children of founders, provided that this admission preference shall be limited to not more than ten percent (10%) of the capacity of the public charter school; third, to siblings of pupils already enrolled in the public charter school; and fourth, an equitable selection process such as by lottery or other random method. There shall be no carryover from year to year of the list maintained to fill vacancies. A new lottery shall be conducted each year to fill vacancies which become available. If so stated in its petition, a public charter school may include the following children within the second priority group subject to the limitations therein:

(i) The children of full-time employees of the public charter school;

(ii) Children who previously attended the public charter school within the previous three (3) school years, but who withdrew as a result of the relocation of a parent or guardian due to an academic sabbatical, employer or military transfer or reassignment.

Otherwise, such children shall be included in the fourth priority group.

(k) The manner in which an annual audit of the financial and programmatic operations of the public charter school is to be conducted.

(l) The disciplinary procedures that the public charter school will utilize, including the procedure by which students may be suspended, expelled and reenrolled, and the procedures required by section 33-210, Idaho Code.

(m) A provision which ensures that all staff members of the public charter school will be covered by the public employee retirement system, federal social security, unemployment insurance, worker's compensation insurance, and health insurance.

(n) The public school attendance alternative for students residing within the school district who choose not to attend the public charter school.

(o) A description of the transfer rights of any employee choosing to work in a public charter school that is approved by the board of trustees of a school district, and the rights of such employees to return to any noncharter school in the same school district after employment at such charter school.

(p) A provision which ensures that the staff of the public charter school shall be considered a separate unit for purposes of collective bargaining.

(q) The manner by which special education services will be provided to students with disabilities who are eligible pursuant to the federal individuals with disabilities education act, including disciplinary procedures for these students.

(r) A plan for working with parents who have students who are dually enrolled pursuant to section 33-203, Idaho Code.

(s) The process by which the citizens in the area of attendance shall be made aware of the enrollment opportunities of the public charter school.

(t) A proposal for transportation services as required by section 33-5208(4), Idaho Code.

(u) A plan for termination of the charter by the board of directors, to include:

(i) Identification of who is responsible for dissolution of the charter school;

(ii) A description of how payment to creditors will be handled;

(iii) A procedure for transferring all records of students with notice to parents of how to request a transfer of student records to a specific school; and

(iv) A plan for the disposal of the public charter school's assets.

(4) The petitioner shall provide information regarding the proposed operation and potential effects of the public charter school including, but not limited to, the facilities to be utilized by the public charter school, the manner in which administrative services of the public charter school are to be provided and the potential civil liability effects upon the public charter school and upon the authorized chartering entity.

(5) At least one (1) person among a group of petitioners of a prospective public charter school shall attend a public charter school workshop offered by the state department of education. The state department of education shall provide notice of dates and locations when workshops will be held, and shall provide proof of attendance to workshop attendees. Such proof shall be submitted by the petitioners to an authorized chartering entity along with the charter petition.

(5) The public charter school commission may approve a charter for a public virtual school under the provisions of this chapter only if it determines that the petition contains the requirements of subsections (3) and (4) of this section and the additional statements describing the following:

(a) The learning management system by which courses will be delivered;

1 (b) The role of the online teacher, including the consistent availability of the teacher to
2 provide guidance around course material, methods of individualized learning in the online
3 course and the means by which student work will be assessed;

4 (c) A plan for the provision of professional development specific to the public virtual
5 school environment;

6 (d) The means by which public virtual school students will receive appropriate
7 teacher-to-student interaction, including timely, frequent feedback about student progress;

8 (e) The means by which the public virtual school will verify student attendance and
9 award course credit. Attendance at public virtual schools shall focus primarily on
10 coursework and activities that are correlated to the Idaho state thoroughness standards;

11 (f) A plan for the provision of technical support relevant to the delivery of online
12 courses;

13 (g) The means by which the public virtual school will provide opportunity for
14 student-to-student interaction; and

15 (h) A plan for ensuring equal access to all students, including the provision of
16 necessary hardware, software and internet connectivity required for participation in online
17 coursework.